



U.S Department of Transportation  
Office of Public Affairs  
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590  
[www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm)

## News

---

DOT 89-10  
Wednesday, May 5, 2010  
Contact: Karen Aldana  
Telephone: (202) 366-9550

### Wisconsin Becomes 25<sup>th</sup> State to Pass Texting Ban for All Drivers *Secretary LaHood Notes Key Milestone as America Reaches Halfway Point on Texting Bans*

WASHINGTON - U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today commended Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle for signing an anti-texting-while-driving bill into law for all drivers in his state. As the 25<sup>th</sup> state to pass a texting ban, Wisconsin has taken the country halfway toward a nationwide prohibition of texting while driving.

“Distracted driving is an epidemic that kills thousands and injures hundreds of thousands more each year. So we’re thrilled to reach the halfway mark toward laws in every state against this dangerous practice. Everyone on Wisconsin’s roads will be safer because this law is on the books,” said Secretary LaHood.

The new Wisconsin law outlaws texting by all drivers. First-time violators face fines of \$20 to \$400, along with four points on their driving records. Second-time violators face fines of \$200 to \$800. The law is primary, meaning police officers can stop motorists suspected of this offense alone. It becomes effective on December 1.

NHTSA has developed sample legislation that states can use as a starting point to craft measures to ban texting. The sample bill is patterned after President Obama's October 1, 2009, Executive Order prohibiting federal employees from texting while operating government-owned vehicles and equipment. Last year, more than 200 distracted driving bills were under consideration by state legislatures, and the pace is expected to increase this year.

Research compiled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration attributed an estimated 6,000 deaths and half-a-million injuries to distracted driving in 2008 alone. Recently, Secretary LaHood launched pilot programs in New York and Connecticut as

part of a “Phone in One Hand. Ticket in the Other.” campaign to study whether increased enforcement and public awareness can reduce distracted driving behavior.

For more information on distracted driving and the Department of Transportation's work, visit [www.distraction.gov](http://www.distraction.gov).